

19
KING and GOVERNMENT:

A
DISCOURSE

ON OCCASION OF THE GREAT FERMENT ABOUT
CIVIL and RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

DESIGNED AS A CHECK TO
INFIDELITY and LICENTIOUSNESS

AS WELL AS A
VINDICATION of our CONSTITUTION,

AND OF
REVEALED RELIGION.

PREACHED JULY 17, 1791,

AND NOW PUBLISHED BY PARTICULAR REQUEST,

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN

A P P E N D I X,

EXHORTING CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS,

TO PEACE and UNITY.

By the Rev. THOMAS DAVIES.

Rector of Coyty, Glamorganshire.

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King: and meddle
not with them that are given to change.

CARMARTHEN:

PRINTED BY JOHN ROSS, IN LAMMAS-STREET.

M,DCC,XCII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

“ I Cannot find any great cause of just com-
“ plaint that good laws have so much
“ been wanting unto us, as we to them. To
“ seek reformation of evil laws is a commend-
“ able endeavour, but for us the more ne-
“ cessary is a speedy reformation of ourselves.

“ Bodies politic are subject as much as na-
“ tural to dissolution by divers means; there
“ are undoubtedly more states overthrown
“ through diseases bred within themselves,
“ than through violence from abroad.

“ Domestic evils, for that we think we can
“ master them at all times, are often permitted
“ to run on forward 'till it be too late to recal
“ them. And disputes in matters of religion
“ are not only the farthest spread, because in
“ religion all men presume themselves interest-
“ ed alike; but they are also for the most part
“ hotlier prosecuted and pursued than other
“ strifes, forasmuch as coldness and modera-
“ tion is not in these, so favourably construed
“ as in other contentions.”

HOOKER's *Eccles. Polity.*



JUDGES XVII. 6.

*In those Days there was no King in Israel,
but every Man did that which was right
in his own Eyes.*

It is plain and evident from many
texts and divers passages of Scrip-
I ture, that all power, pre-eminence
and authority originate from God,
who, by His providence, is the Supreme Go-
vernour of the world, and the wise Disposer of
all events.

At the time referred to in my text (not long
after Joshua's death) there was no king in
Israel, no judge to govern, nor chief magistrate
to controul the people, consequently every man
did that which was right in his own eyes. God
used to raise up judges to rule and to deliver his
people, when he saw fit and proper; and at
other times, for their sins, he suffered them to
be without them, and such a time was this,
and therefore they ran into that idolatry, from
which the judges usually kept them; but when
left to themselves they did not what pleased
God, but what best suited every one's own
fancy and inclination.

When the judges grew corrupt, we find that
the elders of Israel came to Samuel and desired
a king to reign over them, which thing greatly
displeased the Prophet, who prayed unto the

Lord on the occasion, and was advised to hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they said unto him, for they have not rejected thee, but have rejected me, saith the Lord, that I should not reign over them.

Was it unlawful for the people to desire a king? No, simply in itself, it was not unlawful. But this was their sin, that they desired it on sinful grounds, and from motives of curiosity, in order to be like the heathen world, and the idolatrous nations round about them, which was plainly and strictly forbidden in the word of God. Besides, they desired it in an impetuous manner, and at an unseasonable time, without asking leave or advice of God, which in so weighty a case they could not neglect without great sin and presumption.

Moreover Samuel delineates the character of the king who should reign over them, and represents him as one that would injuriously oppress and cruelly harass his subjects in many respects; which prophecy was afterwards literally accomplished in the reign of Saul. But in spite of Samuel's arguments, threatenings and entreaties, the people persisted in their point, and would have their end at all events. And the consequence of their perverseness and irreverent proceedings, though gratified in their desires, evidently proves that no people will prosper long that run counter to the will of the Lord, and that make light of his laws and religion.

The necessary expence of a state is great,
but

but where violence and fraud prevail, it must be sensibly felt, and be a matter of grief to all the people. The Lord, when he gives us the character of a king, says, that he shall not multiply wives, horses, silver and gold, &c. lest they become a snare unto him, and steal his heart and draw his confidence from the Lord of Hosts, who is the wholesome defence of his anointed, and the Protector of all them that put their trust in him. Cursed is every one who trusteth in an arm of flesh, or in perishing things; but he who believeth in the Lord shall never be confounded.

Through all the chances and changes of this troublesome world, the Lord preserved his church in all ages, and according to his most faithful promise, will continue to do so, to the end of time. Every occurrence in human life, every circumstance of time and place, answer the grand purpose of salvation, and work together for good to them that love God. The world is continually changing and passing away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. States and kingdoms, empires and dominions have their rise and fall, their progress and declension, like all other sublunary things. The rise and fall of the four great Monarchies of the world fully evince the truth of this assertion.

Let us take a nearer and more particular view of the world, and what shall we behold but the direful effects of the fall amongst all classes and descriptions of men! What publick hatred,

hatred; what private grudge, what violence and fraud reign here below ! What secret distrust, jealousy, envy and discontent distract the human breast ! What bustle and noise, what tumult and sedition, what broils and animosities disturb our peace, and distress our heart ! Does not all this, and much more than can be mentioned, prove man a degenerate fallen creature ? The innumerable evils that attend mankind bespeak their forlorn condition, and are plain indications of God's displeasure against sin and disobedience. Wars and rumours of wars, famine and pestilence, &c. are the immediate harbingers of His wrath and indignation. Every discord and disturbance---every pique and quarrel manifest our strangeness to God; and the enmity of our hearts against His government. We pretend to know the world, while, in a great measure, we are ignorant of ourselves, and we talk at times as if we could controul Providence, and give laws to the Almighty, and we ourselves without law or proper government over our passions and inordinate affections. Every man by nature is a rebel in his heart against God, and should he give the reins to his corruptions, he will be a rebel in practice. And therefore where the Gospel has not its proper effect, and peculiar energy on the minds of men, the laws must be enforced for the due observation of civility and good manners. If all men were on a level, and left at liberty to do what they list, without any restraint, what a shocking scene would this world

world exhibit! It would be a field of blood instead of a land of liberty.

While I deprecate this sort of licentious liberty, let me assure you that I am a sincere friend and hearty well wisher to true Gospel-liberty. I wish the spirit of the Gospel did spread from pole to pole, and the saving knowledge of Jesus did fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. May the Lord hasten that blessed period when Jews and Gentiles shall become one fold under one Shepherd, Christ Jesus, and when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more, but peace and unity, prevail every where. True Gospel-liberty is not a liberty to think and act as we like without submission to God or man. Liberty without subordination is full fraught with anarchy and confusion; and to allow it in this sense is to destroy it.

This was much the case when there was no king in Israel. Every one then did that which was right in his own eyes, without asking advice of God, without consulting the publick good nor studying the common interest of one another in civil or religious matters. The publick worship was neglected, and the administration of justice suspended. They who were disposed to repair to Shilo, where the tabernacle and the ark then stood, and where the true religion was established, might go there, or not go, according to their pleasure and inclination. Such as deserted this place of publick resort and religious assembling were
not

not corrected as their contempt and religious indifference required. And they who through vanity, superstition and ease would fain keep a Levite at home, like Micah in his house, were indulged in their caprice and humoured in their whim. Every religion is alike when the true religion is lost. Every thing that strikes the fancy and seems most pleasing to flesh and blood passes for truth, without any test or touchstone of trial. When this is the case, superstition and idolatry, deism and infidelity will rear up their heads on high, and set aside the religion of the bible. What sort of liberty is that which makes light of the Scripture, and laughs at revealed religion? And can there be no liberty without indulging alike all denominations of christians, and all sorts of opinions, though ever so erroneous in their nature and pernicious in their tendency. Do not think that I want to justify an intolerant and bigotted spirit. There is nothing farther from my intention, because I am truly sensible, there is nothing farther from the nature and design of christianity. I would not have any man harrassed on account of his religious opinion, provided it does not endanger the welfare of the church and state, nor prompt to the disturbance of the publick peace and tranquility of the nation.

But to this tenet, some will object with fury, and vehemently affirm that there is no kind of alliance between the church and state, and consequently, that it is immaterial to the state
what

what a man's opinion is, if he be only an honest subject. I think it is right and highly requisite to put *if* in, for very often, and, I believe, most commonly, men's opinions and principles have great and powerful influence on their conduct and behaviour, and will always bias them to their own point, when left to themselves.---Without government every man will do that which is right in his own eyes. It is a very great thing to be divested of prejudice, and to be open to conviction from all quarters. However, I will allow that the church of Christ, in a mystical sense, has no alliance nor connexion with the state: As a distinct body of christian people gathered out of the world by the Spirit of Christ, and set apart by the grace of the Gospel, as God's peculiar treasure, the church is, perhaps, no part of the state, but is the mystical body of Christ. Nevertheless, as the church is *in*, though not *of* the world, in a civil sense, it has an alliance with the state, and partakes of its advantages and disadvantages, in common with all the members of the community.

Our blessed Saviour said of his Disciples, that they were not of this world, and when he stood before Pilate, he openly avowed that his kingdom was not of this world, yet we find that the meek and lowly Jesus, and his Disciples paid tribute to Cæsar, frequented the Synagogues, resorted to the temple at public times, and in all respects conformed to the Jewish œconomy, never exclaiming against the usage

and order, but always against the sin and hypocrisy of that antient people of God--the Jews. While we are in the body, we are connected with, and dependent on, one another, both as fellow creatures, and fellow christians, and in order to maintain peace and preserve unity we ought to submit to government, and obey the powers that are set over us, for conscience's sake.

Kings and governours, judges and magistrates are the guardians and protectors of the rights and liberties of the people, on which account they ought to be feared and had in reverence of all men. We always find the primitive christians to be a loyal people in every state, and ready on all occasions of emergency to manifest their unfeigned obedience and sincere attachment to the government they were under. They never refused obedience to the laws, but when they disagreed with the word of God, and could not be obeyed without guilt. In that case they judged it fitter to obey God, than man. And even then, in the most trying circumstances, they were not factious and turbulent, but patient and humble to the highest degree, and always more ready to suffer than to sin. May we follow their example in this and every other christian virtue, and demonstrate by our lives and conversation, that we possess a measure of the same spirit, and that we belong to the same master. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Love is the characteristic of
the

the christian religion, and the badge of the disciples of Jesus. Whatever we possess, if short of this, we are but as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals. God is the author of peace and lover of concord, and we also should be promoters of peace and unanimity in church and state, and all over the world, according to our power and ability.

Some people wish to live (Salamander-like) in the fire of contention. But they proclaim their folly and publish their iniquity to the world. We should neither be afraid nor ashamed to profess ourselves true friends to good order and discipline, and notwithstanding the great clutter and clamour about civil and religious liberty, and the natural rights of men, it is my humble opinion that our constitution, with all its imperfections, is at this time, one of the best under the cope of heaven. Every government has its imperfections, and every human institution, in process of time, is subject to more or less abuse. This is not to be wondered at, nay, it cannot well be expected otherwise, while the corruption of mankind is so prevalent, and the deluge of vice and immorality so universal, all over the globe. View every department, consider every station, and inspect every corner of the earth, and you will find corruption and abomination abounding every where. And when you have traversed in your mind the whole world, take a retrospect view of our government, examine it minutely, compare it impartially with other governments,

and then, I am persuaded, that you will see and acknowledge its superior excellence and advantage. Our lives and properties are not at the will of the prince, as is the case in many countries, and under all tyranical and arbitrary governments, where there is no trial by jury in crimes and cases of misdemeanor. We can appeal to the laws of our country, and demand a trial by our fellow creatures (a pannel of jury) who are to bring in their verdict of guilty or not guilty, before any delinquent or offender can be either acquitted or condemned. The accuser and the accused are to appear against each other in open court, where they are required, upon due summons, to produce their allegations, and bring evidences to declare upon oath what they know in the contest, in order that the judge and jury may form a proper judgment on the case, and finally determine the dispute. In our country, and by our laws no one is condemned unheard. And we boast of this, amongst many others, as one of our greatest privileges.

At the same time, while I am so favourable to our government, permit me to assure you that I am not blind to its faults and imperfections, which I pray God to heal and reform in his own time and in his own way. And I would advise every one who is disaffected to our constitution, to set about reforming his own heart, before he meddles with our government. First take the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out

out of thy brother's eye. As it is dangerous to let an unskilful hand to tamper with the eye, so it is equally dangerous to suffer turbulent persons and factious spirits to meddle with government, lest by endeavouring to reform its abuses, they should unwarily or designedly annihilate its very existence, and extirpate it root and branch, by destroying the good with the bad, without discrimination.

Nothing but sin can draw God's wrath on any people. Instead of disputing and quarrelling with one another, let us prize our privileges, and devote our time and talents to the service of God, and the edification of each other. This is the sure way to prosper, and to secure to ourselves and to our posterity a continuance of the great and inestimable blessings and advantages we enjoy, as a people highly favoured of the Lord, and exalted above all the nations of the world.

The word of God is a lanthorn to our feet and a light to our paths, to keep us from error both in opinion and practice. There we have an account not only how sin entered into the world and ruined the whole human race, but also how God in infinite mercy provided a remedy for this evil, by laying help on one that is mighty, and exalting one chosen out of the people. The Lamb of God by his obedience and sufferings hath taken away the sins of the world, and obtained for us eternal redemption. And in proportion to the knowledge and experience we have of the depravity of our nature

nature and the plague of our own hearts, so with our value and esteem be of Christ's merits and atonement. All the sacrifices under the law were typical of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and pointed to Jesus as the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. Thus the gospel was preached under the old dispensation, and it is one and the same for ever. Jesus Christ the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. There is no salvation in any other, neither is there any other name under heaven given whereby we can be saved. The right knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified, will effectually banish all pharisaical pride and formality, as well as slavish fear and bondage from our minds. We find the apostles in all their writings inculcating the doctrines of faith and free grace as the foundation and ground work of all morality, previous to their recommending and enforcing social and relative duties. To teach morality without laying this foundation is neither consistent with scripture, nor yet agreeable to the liturgy, articles, and homilies of our church. As the tree must grow before it can be expected to bear fruit, so faith, as a principle of divine life, must precede good works, before ever they will be accounted genuine, and approved of God, who is the Searcher of the heart, and tryer of the reins, and a consuming fire to all that will presume to approach him without the wedding-garment required in holy scripture.

The

The primitive christians considered the gospel not as a matter of speculation, or a system of ethics, but as a special favour and singular kindness from heaven to wretched sinful man--as an extraordinary message of pardon and peace to guilty and condemned malefactors,---yea, as a wonderful scheme of mercy to lost sinners. This right apprehension of the gospel filled the believers with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and produced suitable effects in their lives and conversation, and fitted them for life or for death, as the Lord's will ordered and appointed it. If we regard Christ as a pattern, and eye him only as an example of godly living, and not also as a propitiation for our sins, we can have but mean ideas of the mysteries of redemption. Salvation by faith through the merits of a crucified Redeemer was foolishness to the wise Greeks, and a stumbling block to the self-righteous Jews. And so it will be to us, unless we submit our reason to revelation, and become fools that we may be wise. Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the wellspring of all sincere and evangelical obedience, and "the very bond of peace, and of all virtues; without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God."

The christian religion stands on its own basis, and bears its own evidence. The more it
is

is tried, the brighter it shines, and in spite of all opposition it constantly thrives, and is always victorious every where. It triumphs over hell, death and the grave. No such a thing can be said of any other religion, nor of all the religions in the world put together. We have had abundant proofs of the weakness and insufficiency of all human efforts and inventions for the purpose of reclaiming mankind, and effecting a saving reformation in the world. But what is impossible with man, is possible with God. The wisest of the heathen philosophers were in the dark, and extremely doubtful about the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and a future state of existence. They could not solve many difficulties which puzzled their wits, respecting the dispensation of providence towards the children of men. All the heathens had some notions of an offended deity, but of the way and means of reconciliation they were utterly ignorant, and therefore they ran into all manner of folly and idolatry.

Blessed be God, life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. We are not left to grope in the dark in search of truth, for it stares us in the face. The Sun is risen upon our land, and the clouds of darkness are in a great measure dispelled. The Lord hath visited us with his salvation. May we rejoice, and be glad thereof. May every idol fall before his presence, as Dagon fell before the ark. Let us walk in the light, and we shall not stumble. Let us cleave to God, and we shall be

be secure.---He will be our God and our guide even unto death, and our portion to all eternity.

If the doctrines of christianity were better understood, and more practically observed, we should have less noise and disputes in the world, and more harmony and concord in every publick and private sphere of life. It ought to be the constant endeavour, and uniform practice of a true christian to keep a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for love is the fulfilling of the law. God is no Respector of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. O love the Lord all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. The Lord is king, be the people never so impatient; He sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding. The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations, Praise ye the Lord. *Amen.*

A P P E N

C

be secure. He will be our God and our guide
 even unto death, and our portion to all eternity.
 If the doctrines of Christianity were better
 understood, and more generally observed, we
 should have less noise and disputes in the world,
 and more harmony and concord in every pub-
 lick and private sphere of life. It ought to be
 the constant endeavour, and uniform practice
 of a true Christian to keep a conscience void of
 offence towards God and towards man. Ren-
 der thanks to all their dues: tribute to whom
 tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear
 to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe
 no man any thing, but to love one another:
 for love is the fulfilling of the law. God is no
 respecter of persons, but in every nation he
 that feareth him and worketh righteousness is
 accepted with him. O love the Lord thy
 master, for the Lord is one: with the faintest and
 pliankest lowliness the proud doest. Be of
 good courage, and the Lord shall strengthen your
 heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. The Lord
 is king, the people never to forget him: the
 earth between the compasses, he the earth be-
 fore to support. Let Israel rejoice in him that
 made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in
 their king. God is the king of all the earth.
 Let us praise thee with understanding. The Lord
 shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion.
 unto all generations. I will praise thee, O Lord.

A P P E N D I X.

IN the CXXII Psalm we have a beautiful representation of the flourishing state of the Jewish church, about that period of time when David was fully established on the throne of Israel. This Psalm is supposed to have been penned in consequence of the entire conquest of Canaan, and especially after the taking of the fort of Zion from the Jebusites, and incorporating it with the city of Jerusalem. The prophetic king and sweet-singer of Israel rejoices at the pleasing prospect of the success of religion, and the peace of the people of Jerusalem at this juncture. It is said to be a city at unity in itself, not only as a place compact in its buildings, but also united in government and religion. The increase of piety, and the general good harmony that subsisted not only amongst the king's fellow-citizens at Jerusalem, but also pervaded every corner of the kingdom, was a just cause of rejoicing to the king, who considered that blessing as the chief strength of his kingdom, and the main support of the church and state. The tribes go up to Jerusalem, even the tribes of the Lord,---not one tribe, nor a few pious persons of each tribe, but whole tribes, and all the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. They were united in their devotion, and praised the Lord with one heart and with

One voice. And so long as this happy union with the Lord and with one another lasted, they prospered.

The Psalmist mentions another great privilege belonging to the Jewish church at Jerusalem. For there is the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David. The supreme court of judicature in civil and ecclesiastical matters was fixt there; and the supremacy settled in the house or family of David. The royal throne was allotted by God to David, and to his posterity for ever. This hereditary succession should have operated as a barrier and prevention against future disputes and disturbances about royalty and government, while the Jewish œconomy shall last. The church and state are now united and as it were incorporated together. The king's court and the ark of the Lord were established at Jerusalem, which in this respect was the mother-city and mother-church of the Jews. Here the temple was afterwards built, the glory and admiration of all the world. Hither the christians resorted and had recourse in all matters of doubt and difficulty in the apostles' time. From that place, as the great reservoir of religion, the gospel spread over all christendom. What a blessing it is when magistrates and ministers unite their powers, and engage their abilities in the cause of religion, and in the interest of christianity. When people are protected in their civil and religious rights by law, they are happy beyond measure.

But

But the devil, the common enemy of mankind will not suffer this happiness to continue long without interruption. In every age he is sowing tares amongst the wheat, in order to destroy union and peace, and hinder the good seed from growing to maturity and perfection. And where ever the seed of dissention is sown, anarchy and confusion is likely to ensue. We ought to be on our guard against the wiles and stratagems of satan, and to bear an open testimony in the face of the world, that we are the Lord's people, by encouraging and promoting peace and unanimity, and by preventing and suppressing, as far as possible, the contagion of schism and sedition. We should be careful not to bite one another lest we be devoured of one another. The Lord's people are compared to sheep, not only as they are harmless and innocent, but also as they are useful and profitable in their day and generation.

In order to obtain and to secure the blessing of peace, we must avoid every thing that is contrary to it, such as prejudice and bigotry, evil surmises, evil speaking, lying and slander-ing, officious intermeddling with other men's matters, every sort of biting scoff, and contemptuous sneer, with every kind of supercilious carriage, haughty behaviour, and whatever directly or indirectly tends to hurt and wound another's good name and reputation. In short, if we study peace, we must avoid all bitterness, and every thing that is contrary to love, and the spirit of the gospel. We must not render
evil

evil for evil to any man, but we must overcome evil with good, and do to all men, as we would they should do unto us.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We should have the interest of religion at heart, and be truly concerned for the public good. We should mourn in secret for our sins and for the sins of the land, and earnestly entreat the Lord to heal the sores of his church, and repair the breaches of his vineyard, and to make his people more of one heart and of one mind in religion. Division is commonly the forerunner of destruction. May we contend no more about names and non-essentials, but may we strive who shall love God most and serve him best. May it be our highest ambition to excel in virtue and godliness. Wars and fightings come from our own lusts, and the way to subdue them is by fasting and prayer. The best place for christians to adjust their differences is at the throne of grace. Let us remember Joseph's advice to his brethren, See that ye fall not out by the way. We are all hastening to our journey's end. In the grave there will be no disturbance, nor distinction, but perfect silence and oblivion. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary is at rest. There is an everlasting Jubilee of release, and an eternal sabbath of rest for the people of God beyond the grave. They are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, but in a little while they shall be at home, and for ever with the Lord,

in

in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and
at whose right hand there are pleasures for
evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



Carrage - 1st/4

[23]

Coachman 1

Captain

Boat 2

To

and joy to souls of joy, and
there is pleasure for

every one.



1841

